

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HU, VT

SUBJECT: "PANORAMA" ARTICLE ON HUNGARY

REF: BUDAPEST 0287; ROME 16017 (NOTAL)

1. JAN. 23 EDITION OF ITALIAN WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE "PANORAMA" DID INDEED CARRY STORY ALLEGING THAT VATICAN AND GOH WILL ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN APRIL. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, ANNOUNCEMENT WITHIN VATICAN CIRCLES HAS CREATED ENTHUSIASM AMONG SUPPORTERS OF OSTPOLITIK, BUT OPPONENTS, NAMELY YUGOSLAVIAN CARDINAL SEPER, HAVE ATTACKED IT STRONGLY. AS RESULT, ARTICLE SAYS, POPE PAUL PLANNING TO REMOVE SEPER FROM HIS POSITION AS HEAD OF SACRED CONGREGATION FOR DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, ONE OF VATICAN'S TOP "MINISTERIES". MOREOVER, ARTICLE NOTES, BISHOP JOSZEF IJJAS WILL SOON BE NAMED CARDINAL AND PRIMATE OF HUNGARY.

2. COMMENT: VATICAN CONSIDERS "PANORAMA'S" COVERAGE OF VATICAN AFFAIRS TO BE THE MOST TENDENTIOUS AND UNRELIABLE OF ALL ITALIAN PRESS AND, BASED ON SEVERAL YEARS OF OBSERVATION, WE CAN CONFIDENTIAL

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EASILY AGREE WITH THIS ESTIMATE. ACCORDING TO RESPONSIBLE

VATICAN SOURCE, ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI DID DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF SOME TYPE OF "INFORMAL" RELATIONS WITH GOH DURING TALKS HELD HERE LAST NOVEMBER. MOST THIS MIGHT LEAD TO, AND AT PRESENT THERE NOTHING DECIDED, WOULD BE SOMETHING SIMILAR TO RELATIONSHIP NOW ESTABLISHED WITH POLAND. THERE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD, HOWEVER, THAT THIS TYPE OF CONTACT, IF ESTABLISHED, WOULD SOON DEVELOP INTO FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. STORY OF CARDINAL SEPER'S LACK OF ENTHUSIASM WITH OSTPOLITIK IS NOT NEW. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY POPE WOULD DEMAND HIS RESIGNATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE SEPER WAS REAPPOINTED TO HIS PRESENT POSITION IN 1973 FOR A NEW 5-YEAR TERM. LJAS IS DEFINITELY NOT VATICAN'S FAVORITE HUNGARIAN PRELATE AND FACT THAT HE REACHES 75 NEXT YEAR, IN ANY CASE, CERTAINLY EXCLUDES HIM FROM CONSIDERATION AS NEXT ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM, A POSITION WHICH IS VIRTUALLY GUARANTEED TO LASZLO LEKAI. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, LJAS HAS ALREADY INFORMED HOLY SEE THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO RESIGN AS PRESIDENT OF HUNGARIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE THIS YEAR, AND WE UNDERSTAND FROM ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI'S OFFICE THAT PRESENT HOPE IS THAT LEKAI WILL TAKE LJAS'S PLACE AS PRESIDENT OF BISHOPS CONFERENCE AND AT SAME TIME POPE WILL NAME HIM AS FULL ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM. IN ANY CASE, VATICAN ASSURES US THAT THEY EXPECT TO NAME LEKAI FULL ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM WHEN LJAS RETIRES AND THAT DELAY NOT OUT OF CONSIDERATION FOR CARDINAL MINDSZENTY. "PANORAMA'S" ASSERTION THAT LJAS WILL SOON BE CARDINAL IS NONSENSICAL. THE POPE PERIODICALLY NAMES CARDINALS IN GROUPS, AND WHILE THERE IS GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT HE MAY CREATE NEW CARDINALS FOR THIS HOLY YEAR 1975, IT SEEMS LOGICAL THAT LEKAI WOULD BE ONLY LIKELY HUNGARIAN CANDIDATE. VOLPE

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